

Homeless Shelter Workers in Midwestern Urban Centers

Archie Green Fellows Project AFC2016034

Oral History of Tynessia Snoddy, Scattered-site Housing Manager with Clare Housing

Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 4, 2017

Summary of Interview

Tynessia Snoddy works as a Scattered-site Housing Manager with Clare Housing, which provides housing and services for individuals and families living with HIV/AIDS, including those who have also experienced homelessness. Clare Housing offices are located at 929 Central Avenue Northeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55413, and they have housing locations throughout the city.

This interview took place in Tynessia Snoddy's office, located in The Blue Line Flats where several Clare Housing clients live at 2340 East 32nd Street, Minneapolis, MN, 55406.

Note: Tynessia sees clients in the office where the interview took place; background noise, and pausing the interview for visitors can be heard in this interview.

Interview Log

- 00:00:01 Introduction
- 00:00:06 Job title is Scattered-site Housing Manager; she describes as Case Manager/Social Worker;
- 00:00:24 A typical day might include:
- screening folks who are homeless and working to get them housing, which is the main part of her job;
 - visiting the many locations where her clients live to assess their needs, provide referrals;
 - going to a lease violation meeting where she meets with property management and client to discuss concerns and help the client keep his/her housing;
 - taking clients to doctors' appointments or grocery store;
 - charting her notes;
- 00:01:52 Description of clients and their homelessness; a large percentage of her clients don't access shelter as they are GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender) individuals who feel traditional shelters are unsafe for them; they're outside or couch-hopping, staying with friends or family, in cars or abandoned buildings;
- 00:02:47 How people find out about her work; case managers; in Minnesota, if you are HIV+ and working with an infectious disease clinic, you can get a medical case manager; prior to coordinated entry, Clare Housing only took applications through medical case managers; that's still how they find Clare Housing; Clare Housing only works with people who have HIV/AIDS, though a non-HIV/AIDS partner will also receive housing/services;

- 00:03:58 Number of clients she works with; rapid growth over the past year—including the doubling of her program; she supports 43 households (a more average number is 16 households) and they are hiring additional staff;
- 00:04:34 How people afford housing; her program uses Group Residential (GRH) Housing, state funding, for the majority of her households; other funding is (Minnesota Housing Finance Agency) MHFA, mostly for families; and Shelter Plus Care (federal funding); Clare Housing receives 70% of its funding from the government; additional funding are CADI (Community Access for Disability Inclusion) waivers, another source of state funding); funding streams pay for rent, the cost of staff to provide supportive services, and other housing costs; Tynessia has clients access programs to help pay utilities or county emergency assistance if people need help;
- 00:06:58 Discussion of how she knits resources together for people; GRH clients receive about \$193 in food stamps each month and \$97 in cash and \$105 to purchase toiletries online through Clare Housing; this doesn't always cover food costs, so she refers them to the Aliveness Project, Open Arms of Minnesota for meals/food shelf; more detailed discussion about funding streams and client challenges making ends meet; brief interruption with audio paused;
- 00:09:51 Landlords and the shortage of affordable housing; reluctance to rent to her clients rather than someone who can pay a higher rent; clients with criminal background or unlawful detainers (part of an eviction) are especially difficult to find housing for; many of her clients are housed in the apartment building where this interview is taking place: the housing developer received tax credits (also called a Section 42 building) in exchange for making a certain number of units affordable;
- 00:11:39 Challenges in finding housing for those with criminal histories, especially drug offenses, prostitution, arson, and sexual offenses; the more recent the offense the harder it is to find housing; if she finds a rundown property where the landlord cares less, the property must pass an inspection to receive the funding; Clare Housing-owned property may be an option; more about criminal offenses she sees; story about a woman with multiple unlawful detainers; clients who build their own relationships with landlords can convince them to rent to them;
- 00:16:25 Homelessness and healthcare if you are HIV+; harder to see providers, take meds on time, eat right
- 00:17:09 How Tynessia came to this work; went to college to be a chemical dependency counselor; internship overwhelmed her by the stories of what people had gone through and convinced her that this was what she wanted to do; worked for Turning Point;
- 00:19:01 Strengths in this work; her mother taught her openness to different people; story about moving from Chicago to California; loves to network; is solutions-based; relationship with God and serving His people; a job that matters—story about working for the airlines in contrast; discussion of pay scale in the people-skill jobs; good communicator, especially with daunting paperwork; has been in her role for one year; newly created position;
- 00:24:42 Challenges of the work; story of filling ten units with her family clients; behavior or mental health or chemical health can interfere with keeping housing; practices housing first and harm reduction, but private landlords have lower tolerance than Clare Housing; having to be the bearer of bad news from landlords;

- 00:30:06 Expectations from clients; depends on their skills; keep appointments; follow-through on plans; contact Tynessia immediately if there's a problem;
- 00:31:50 Measuring success; story of a person she encouraged to work rather than be on a program; story about a client practicing not letting guests visit; commonly newly housed people want to provide a place for their still-homeless friends; discussion of how daunting housing responsibilities can feel; story of people who have not rented in decades; story of working at Salvation Army; story of a person who'd been there for two years who had no barriers but had never been housed;
- 00:39:55 Works with people as long as they're in a Clare Housing program; some are independent and need very little contact; others need regular check-ins;
- 00:40:31 Discussion of how this work has changed her perspective; has always worked in housing, but prior to working in a shelter she didn't realize how bad homelessness is; a greater compassion for people; she is very grateful for even small things; angrier at inequities, lack of resources; (brief interruption by visitor here);
- 00:43:53 How her work is impacted by larger events; legislation and funding changes; healthcare changes, HIV meds cost \$3000-\$6000 for one 30-day pill prescription; aside about worrying for her clients while she and others will survive economic changes; weather can impede her getting to see people; story about a client who broke his leg in the winter;
- 00:46:36 The future of her work; HIV and hope for a cure, but expects social work to always be a need;
- 00:47:24 Wisdom for people entering the field; let go of what you believe to be "normal"; prepare to be educated; story about clients' resourcefulness; keep learning about new practices, knowledge, like "trauma" which wasn't a knowledge base a decade ago; description of trauma;
- 00:52:25 End